

The St. Bernard Voice

Friday, November 12, 2010

Reviews: Xavier Opera Workshop and Shore

By Vella Christina

Xavier University's Opera Workshop presented scenes from Donizetti's "The Elixir of Love," happily confirming that Italian opera still flourishes in universities. The fledging voices struggled bravely with the arias, and the girls—Crystal Morris, Alesia Sterling, Kapria Joseph, and Melissa Lewis—showed a nice vocal suppleness. The outstanding artist of the presentation was piano accompanist Wilfred Delphin.

The second part of the show offered a one-act opera—an operetta, really—by faculty member Dan Shore, "An Embarrassing Position." What an unexpected delight to find that a modern composer can produce a string of ravishing melodies!

The libretto was hard to understand due to the diction of the inexperienced students. The story was a nineteenth century farce on the order of Georges Feydeau. Probably it needs brightening, since there seemed to be a certain amount of repetition that audiences accept in a foreign language, but becomes noticeable when a work is sung in English. Nevertheless, it would be wonderful to see this lovely work in a full production by a clever stage director and professional singers.

The music is enchanting, with one memorable song after another, in the style of Franz Lehar and Victor Herbert. The audience did something unheard of after a performance of a contemporary composer—they went out humming the tunes. Everybody present, it seemed, would have been happy to hear the entire one-act opera repeated then and there. It will be exciting to look forward to this young composer's future works.

Xavier's upcoming concerts include a performance by the Symphonic Band on Thursday, Nov. 11 at 7, and a program of the music of Robert Schumann featuring the entire Xavier music department on Tuesday, Nov. 16 at 7. On Nov. 17 at 7 Veronica Downs-Dorsey and Clark Knighten will give a dual piano recital, "The Art of the Gospel;" On Nov. 18 Tim Turner will direct the Jazz Ensemble; on Saturday, Nov. 20, Sojiro Yamada will conduct the University Chamber Ensemble.